KCC 4844 (K-C 16,629)
PATENT

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims

1. (Original) A pattern-unbonded nonwoven fabric, comprising:

a nonwoven web having a fibrous structure of individual fibers or filaments;

the nonwoven web having on a surface thereof a pattern of continuous bonded areas defining a first plurality of discrete unbonded areas and a second plurality of discrete unbonded areas;

the first plurality of discrete unbonded areas having a first characteristic; and

the second plurality of discrete unbonded areas having a second characteristic different from the first characteristic.

2. (Previously Presented) The fabric of claim 1, wherein at least a portion of the individual fibers or filaments within the first plurality of discrete unbonded areas extend into and are bonded within the continuous bonded areas.

3. (Previously Presented) The fabric of claim 2, wherein at least a portion of the individual fibers or filaments within the second plurality of discrete unbonded extend into and are bonded within the continuous bonded areas.

4. (Previously Presented) The fabric of claim 3, wherein the continuous bonded areas comprise from about 25 percent to about 50 percent of the nonwoven web.

5. (Original) The fabric of claim 1, wherein the nonwoven web includes melt-spun filaments.

6. (Original) The fabric of claim 5, wherein said nonwoven web includes melt-spun filaments, including multicomponent filaments.

7. (Original) The fabric of claim 4, wherein the nonwoven web includes staple fibers.

8. (Original) The fabric of claim 1, further comprising a film layer attached to a surface of the nonwoven web opposite the surface having the pattern of continuous bonded areas defining the first plurality of discrete unbonded areas, and the second plurality of discrete unbonded areas.9. The fabric of claim 1, further comprising a second nonwoven web having a fibrous structure of individual fibers or filaments, the second nonwoven web being laminated to the first nonwoven web.

9. (Original) The fabric of claim 1, further comprising a second nonwoven web having a fibrous structure of individual fibers or filaments, the second nonwoven web being laminated to the first nonwoven web.

10. (Previously Presented) The fabric of claim 1, wherein the first characteristic is a first opacity level and the second characteristic is a second opacity level, the second opacity level being higher than the first opacity level.

11. (Previously Presented) The fabric of claim 1, wherein the first characteristic is a first tensile strength and the second characteristic is a second tensile strength, the second tensile strength being greater than the first tensile strength.

12. (Original) The fabric of claim 11, wherein the second tensile strength is about twenty-two pounds.

13. (Original) The fabric of claim 11, wherein the first tensile strength is about thirteen pounds.

14. (Original) The fabric of claim 11, wherein the second tensile strength is about nine pounds greater than the first tensile strength.

15. (Original) The fabric of claim 1, wherein the first characteristic is a first stiffness, and wherein the second characteristic is a second stiffness.

16. (Original) The fabric of claim 15, wherein the first stiffness is greater than the second stiffness such that the nonwoven web in a region including the second plurality of discrete unbonded areas more easily bends.

17. (Original) The fabric of claim 15, wherein the second stiffness is greater than the first stiffness.

18. (Previously Presented) The fabric of claim 1, wherein the first characteristic is a first fluid flow the second characteristic is a second fluid flow.

19. (Original) The fabric of claim 18, wherein the second fluid flow is greater than the first fluid flow.

20. (Original) The fabric of claim 18, wherein the second fluid flow is less than the first fluid flow.

21. (Previously Presented) A pattern-unbonded non-woven web, comprising:

a first region including a first pattern of continuous

bonded areas defining a first plurality of discrete unbonded areas;

at least one second region including a second pattern of continuous bonded areas defining a second plurality of discrete unbonded areas, the second pattern being different from the first pattern.

22. (Previously Presented) The web of claim 21, wherein the first region is adapted for fastening engagement with a hook-type fastener.

23. (Original) The web of claim 21, wherein the at least one second region is adjacent the first region in a machine cross direction of the web.

24. (Previously Presented) The web of claim 21, wherein the at least one second region includes a transition region adjacent the first region, and wherein the transition region includes a third pattern of continuous bonded areas defining a third plurality of discrete unbonded areas, the third pattern being a gradient from the first pattern to the second pattern.

25. (Previously Presented) The web of claim 21, wherein the first pattern has a first characteristic and the second pattern has a second characteristic different from said first characteristic.

26. (Previously Presented) The web of claim 25, wherein the first characteristic is a first opacity level and the second characteristic is a second opacity level, the second opacity level being higher than the first opacity level.

27. (Previously Presented) The web of claim 25, wherein the first characteristic is a first tensile strength and the second characteristic is a second tensile strength, the second tensile strength being greater than the first tensile strength.

28. (Original) The web of claim 27, wherein the second tensile strength is about twenty-two pounds.

29. (Original) The web of claim 27, wherein the first tensile strength is about thirteen pounds.

30. (Original) The web of claim 27, wherein the second tensile strength is about nine pounds greater than the first tensile strength.

31. (Previously Presented) The web of claim 25, wherein the first characteristic is a first stiffness and the second characteristic is a second stiffness.

32. (Original) The web of claim 31, wherein the first stiffness is greater than the second stiffness such that the nonwoven web in a region including the second plurality of discrete unbonded areas more easily bends.

33. (Original) The web of claim 31, wherein the second stiffness is greater than the first stiffness.

34. (Previously Presented) The web of claim 25, wherein the first characteristic is a first fluid flow and the second characteristic is a second fluid flow.

35. (Original) The fabric of claim 34, wherein the second fluid flow is greater than the first fluid flow.

36. (Original) The fabric of claim 34, wherein the second fluid flow is less than the first fluid flow.

37. (Previously Canceled).

38. (Original) A disposable absorbent article comprising the pattern-unbonded nonwoven fabric of claim 1.

39. (Withdrawn) A disposable absorbent article, comprising:

a bodyside liner;

an outer cover;

an absorbent structure disposed between the liner and the outer cover;

a mechanical fastening tab joined to the article, the fastening tab including a male fastening component; and

a female component joined to the outer cover and adapted for releasable engagement with the male component,

the female component comprising the pattern-unbonded nonwoven fabric of claim 1.

40. (Previously Canceled)

41. (Previously Canceled)

42. (Withdrawn) The process of claim 61, further comprising:

forming a second nonwoven web having a fibrous structure of individual fibers or filaments;

feeding the first and second nonwoven webs through the nip in opposed relationship with each other; and

bonding the first and second nonwoven webs together to form a pattern-unbonded nonwoven laminate.

43. (Withdrawn) A disposable absorbent article, comprising:

an article chassis having a side edge;

a pattern-unbonded material on the article chassis, the pattern-unbonded material including a first region and at least one second region, the first region including a first pattern of continuous bonded areas defining a first plurality of discrete unbonded areas, the second region including a second pattern of continuous bonded areas defining a second plurality of discrete unbonded areas, the second pattern being different from the first pattern;

at least a portion of the second region extending out beyond the side edge of said article chassis.

44. (Withdrawn) The article of claim 43, wherein the second region is cantilevered to the first region.

45. (Withdrawn) The article of claim 43, wherein the first region is adapted to receive a hook-type fastener to close the article about a wearer.

46. (Withdrawn) The article of claim 43, wherein the at least one second region is adjacent the first region in a machine cross direction of the material.

47. (Withdrawn) The article of claim 43, wherein the at least one second region includes a transition region adjacent the first region, and wherein the transition region includes a third pattern of continuous bonded areas defining a third

plurality of discrete unbonded areas, the third pattern being a gradient from the first pattern to the second pattern.

48. (Withdrawn) The article of claim 43, wherein the first pattern has a first characteristic and the second pattern has a second characteristic different from said first characteristic.

49. (Withdrawn) The article of claim 48, wherein the first characteristic is a first opacity level and the second characteristic is a second opacity level, the second opacity level being higher than the first opacity level.

50. (Withdrawn) The article of claim 48, wherein the first characteristic is a first tensile strength and the second characteristic is a second tensile strength, the second tensile strength being greater than the first tensile strength.

51. (Withdrawn) The article of claim 50, wherein the second tensile strength is about twenty-two pounds.

52. (Withdrawn) The article of claim 50, wherein the first tensile strength is about thirteen pounds.

53. (Withdrawn) The article of claim 50, wherein the second tensile strength is about nine pounds greater than the first tensile strength.

54. (Withdrawn) The article of claim 48, wherein the first characteristic is a first stiffness and the second characteristic is a second stiffness.

55. (Withdrawn) The article of claim 54, wherein the first stiffness is greater than the second stiffness such that the nonwoven web in a region including the second plurality of discrete unbonded areas more easily bends.

56. (Withdrawn) The article of claim 54, wherein the second stiffness is greater than the first stiffness.

57. (Withdrawn) The article of claim 48, wherein the first characteristic is a first fluid flow and the second characteristic is a second fluid flow.

58. (Withdrawn) The fabric of claim 57, wherein the second fluid flow is greater than the first fluid flow.

59. (Withdrawn) The fabric of claim 57, wherein the second fluid flow is less than the first fluid flow.

60. (Withdrawn) A mechanical fastening system comprising:

a first fastening component; and

a second fastening component comprising a first region having a first pattern of continuous bonded areas defining a first plurality of discrete unbonded areas adapted for releasable engagement with the first component, and a second region having a second pattern of continuous bonded areas defining a second plurality of discrete unbonded areas, said second pattern being different from said first pattern.

61. (Withdrawn) A process for forming a pattern-unbonded nonwoven fabric, said process comprising:

forming a first nonwoven web having a fibrous structure of individual fibers or filaments;

feeding the nonwoven web through a nip defined between respective outer surfaces of opposed first and second rolls, the outer surface of at least one of said rolls having a pattern formed thereon and corresponding to a desired pattern to be formed on a surface of the web as the web is passed through the nip; and

applying heat to the web as the web is fed through the nip to form on said surface of the web continuous bonded areas defining a first pattern of discrete unbonded areas and a second pattern of discrete unbonded areas, the first pattern having at least one characteristic which is different from that of the second pattern.